

Breaking Barriers: Educational Program Transition from Elementary to Integrated Schools and Student's Outcome in Tboli, South Cotabato

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Abstract

Aim: This study examined the barriers and school transition and their relationship to student outcomes in integrated schools and Tboli West District, South Cotabato Division, for the school year 2024-20225

Methodology: The study used a quantitative approach, employing descriptive and correlational designs. The respondents were two hundred nine (209) teachers, eleven (11) school heads, eleven (11) parents, and eleven (11) student representatives in the schools of Tboli West District.

Results: The study on integrated schools reveals that most classes (63%) have fewer than 50 students, ensuring a manageable student-teacher ratio for individualized instruction. A majority of schools (62%) cater to junior high school (Grades 7-10), while 38% offer senior high school (Grades 7-12). The extent of breaking barriers shows moderate progress (mean = 3.10), with land-related concerns being the best-managed area (mean = 3.28) and physical obstacles requiring the most improvement (mean = 2.91). Financial management, teacher deployment, and infrastructure also need further development. Regarding school transitions, curriculum and instruction implementation is moderate (mean = 3.39), with student engagement (3.18) and parental/community involvement (3.04) also at moderate levels. Resource availability (2.64) and teacher preparedness (2.45) are the weakest areas, indicating a need for better facilities and professional development. Student outcomes indicate moderate levels of academic behavior (2.97), socioemotional development (3.17), holistic growth (2.95), and transition readiness (3.05). The overall transition readiness score (3.03) suggests that while students are somewhat prepared, academic confidence and time management improvements are necessary. The analysis of predictors shows that larger class sizes slightly hinder program transition. A statistically significant moderate positive relationship exists between program transition and student outcomes (r = 0.563, p = 0.000), indicating that improved transition programs enhance student performance. Similarly, reducing barriers positively influences student outcomes (r = 0.394, p = 0.000). Strengthening school infrastructure, accessibility, and support systems can improve school transition effectiveness and student success.

Conclusion: The study findings the favorable class size distribution suggests that schools have the potential to provide quality learning experiences. However, while many schools accommodate junior high school levels, the limited number of senior high school schools offering it indicates a gap in delivering seamless secondary education. Strengthening educational programs and resources for senior high school students is essential to ensure a smooth academic transition. Meanwhile, though schools have made progress in securing land and ensuring accessibility, the persistent challenges in physical infrastructure and financial management highlight the need for increased investment in facilities and resources. On the other hand, efforts in curriculum alignment and student engagement are evident; limited resources and insufficient teacher training hinder effective transitions. Enhancing teacher preparedness through professional development and increasing access to educational materials can significantly improve students' transition experiences. As students exhibit a fair degree of socio-emotional stability, there is a need to strengthen academic behaviors and holistic skills. Schools should implement targeted interventions to improve study habits, motivation, and critical thinking abilities. It also highlighted the well-structured transition programs in shaping student success. Continuous

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monitoring and evaluation of transition strategies can ensure that students receive the necessary academic and socioemotional guidance for a seamless progression through school levels. Finally, addressing barriers contributes to student success; other factors, such as curriculum quality, teacher effectiveness, and student motivation, play crucial roles. A holistic approach means integrating infrastructure improvements with effective teaching strategies and student support initiatives.

Keywords: Integrated schools, school transition, breaking barriers, student outcomes, inclusive education, educational infrastructure, teacher preparedness

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, pursuing inclusive and equitable education remains a cornerstone of societal progress. Education imparts knowledge and skills, fosters social cohesion, and empowers individuals to contribute meaningfully to their communities. The concept of integrated schools, which bring together students from diverse backgrounds and abilities under one educational institution, has gained significant attention as a potential avenue to break down barriers and promote a more inclusive learning environment.

Across the globe, integrated education knows no borders and stands as a united endeavor to promote inclusivity, honor diversity, and ensure equal educational prospects. Nations worldwide have undertaken distinct routes to integrated education, adapting them to their specific circumstances and requirements. These approaches encompass cultural integration, which nurtures cross-cultural understanding among students from diverse backgrounds, and inclusive education, which seamlessly incorporates students with varying learning abilities into mainstream classrooms, often supported by comprehensive legal structures (UNESCO, 2021). Yet, amid these triumphs, international experiences lay bare persistent hurdles. These encompass the imperative for enhanced teacher training, judicious resource allocation, and the need to tackle societal attitudes that impede the full acceptance of diversity (Alhaddab, 2018). In response, nations have devised ingenious solutions, harnessing technology for personalized learning, shaping flexible curricula, and embracing collaborative teaching methods to enhance the integrated education journey.

NEP 2020's endorsement of a flexible curriculum structure augurs significant shifts in design pedagogy. This approach empowers institutions to modify educational offerings to the unique needs and aspirations of students, allowing for a more personalized and dynamic learning journey. However, implementing such flexibility necessitates a nuanced understanding of curriculum design, assessment strategies, and logistical considerations (Haribhau, et al., 2024).

Once these are brought into perspective, they make understandable the rationales behind a slew of policies and programmes that have shaped primary and secondary education here (Ho & Lee, 2022).

Transitions are critical periods in students' lives and have become very diverse. After completing the schooling programme, students are provided with a range of possible destinations including tertiary education, vocational education, various pathways to prepare for university, employment, or even disengagement from both work and education.

Integrated schools have become a cornerstone of the Philippines' educational landscape, primarily within the K-12 Basic Education Program framework, designed to bolster the nation's global competitiveness (Republic Act No. 10533). However, it encounters several barriers and challenges in educational transitions. Physical barriers include inadequate school infrastructure and facilities, which hinder effective learning environments (DepEd, 2022). Issues related to land titles and territories also pose significant obstacles, such as legal disputes affecting the establishment of new schools (DepEd, 2023). Manpower mobilization is another challenge, with uneven teacher distribution affecting educational quality, particularly in underserved areas (DepEd, 2021). Additionally, financial management issues involve budget constraints and resource allocation difficulties, impacting the support and development of educational programs (DepEd, 2022).

In terms of school transition, DepEd focuses on several key areas. Curriculum and instruction must be aligned to ensure continuity in learning as students move from elementary to integrated schools (DepEd, 2022). Student engagement and participation are promoted through interactive teaching methods and support programs (DepEd, 2023). Parent and community involvement is encouraged to foster collaborative efforts in supporting education (DepEd, 2021). Ensuring adequate resources and facilities is crucial for a smooth transition, requiring ongoing updates and maintenance (DepEd, 2022). Lastly, teacher preparedness and professional development are emphasized to equip educators with the skills to manage transitions effectively (DepEd, 2023).

In Tboli, Integrated Schools are strategically positioned to facilitate a smooth educational transition for students moving from elementary (Grade 6) to junior high school (Grade 7 to 10). Literature underscores that



integrating these educational levels ensures a more seamless academic journey, reducing potential disruptions during this critical transition period (Cruz, 2017). They are usually located in far-flung schools where access to secondary education is challenging. These transitions can present various barriers that impact students' ability to adapt and succeed in their new educational environments. Breaking these barriers involves identifying and addressing students' challenges, implementing effective strategies, and creating supportive systems to ensure a smooth transition.

While integrated schools offer numerous advantages, challenges persist, including resource disparities between urban and rural regions, classroom overcrowding, and teacher shortages. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced further hurdles related to remote learning and health and safety protocols (Ramos, 2020). Nevertheless, integrated schools are aligned with the Philippines' unwavering commitment to educational equity, particularly in remote and underserved areas, where they aim to provide quality education (UNICEF, 2016).

Though there is a substantial body of literature on integrated schools in the Philippines, particularly within the context of the K-12 Basic Education Program, there is a noticeable research gap regarding the specific challenges, successes, and experiences of students, teachers, parents, and communities during the transition process in remote and culturally diverse areas like Tboli, South Cotabato. Existing literature often provides a broad overview of integrated schools at the national level or focuses on urban settings (Cruz, 2017). Limited empirical research delves into the unique ecological systems and contextual factors in remote areas, such as Tboli, and how these factors influence the effectiveness of integrated schools (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Therefore, this study was conducted to comprehensively examine the transition process within the distinct ecological systems of Tboli. It has determined the extent of breaking barriers and transitioning from elementary to integrated school and its relationship to student outcomes.

Objectives

This study determined the barriers and school transition and its relationship with student outcomes in Tboli West District for school year 2024-2025.

- Specifically, the study sought answers to the following research questions:
- 1. What is the profile of integrated schools in terms of:
 - 1.1 classroom size;
 - 1.2 class size; and
 - 1.3 grade level offered?
- 2. To what extent are the barriers in terms of:
 - 2.1 physical;
 - 2.2 land title and territories;
 - 2.3 manpower mobilization; and
 - 2.4 financial management?
- 3. To what extent do schools transition their education program in terms of:
 - 3.1 curriculum and instruction;
 - 3.2 student engagement and participation;
 - 3.3 parent and community involvement;
 - 3.4 resources and facilities; and
 - 3.5 teachers' preparedness and professional development?
- 4. What is the level of student outcomes in integrated schools in terms of:
 - 2.1 academic behavior;
 - 2.2 socio-emotional development;
 - 2.3 holistic skills; and
 - 2.4 transition readiness?
- 5. Is there a significant difference in the extent of education program transition based on the integrated school profile?
- 6. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of transition and the level of student outcome?
- 7. Is there a significant relationship between barriers and the level of student outcome?



Hypothesis

The formulated hypotheses in null form to guide the study were:

- There is no significant difference in the extent of education program transition based on the integrated school profile.
- 2. There is no significant relationship between the extent of transition and student outcomes in Tboli West District, South Cotabato.
- There is no significant relationship between barriers and the level of student outcome. 3.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational design. It allowed researchers to dig into the intricate relationships among various factors influencing student outcomes. This design primarily serves the purpose of comprehending the connections between different variables that impact integrated schools. These variables encompass academic performance, socio-emotional development, holistic skills, and resource allocation, all of which are crucial components in assessing the holistic development of students within these schools (Jones et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2020).

In the context of integrated schools, this research design has involved collecting quantitative data through surveys, assessments, or standardized measures. These data sources were instrumental in guantifying variables like academic achievement (e.g., through test scores), socio-emotional development (e.g., using surveys to gauge emotional well-being), holistic skills (e.g., assessments to measure critical thinking), and resource allocation (e.g., examining budget and teacher guality data).

Importantly, the descriptive correlation design is apt for exploratory research to identify and describe relationships between variables, as in studying integrated schools in Tboli West District (Bjorklund, 2022). These schools are multifaceted, and numerous variables can influence student outcomes. Therefore, this design provides a systematic approach to understanding these intricate relationships (Kennedy, 2018).

Population and Sampling

Considering the small number of target respondents in Tboli West District, this study utilized a complete enumeration technique. A complete enumeration of all Two hundred forty-two (242) teachers, school heads, parent representatives, and student body representatives who met the set criteria was conducted. Complete enumeration, or a census, is an ideal sampling method for small populations of 200 or fewer individuals (Creswell, 2014).

This study's use of complete enumeration has eliminated sampling error and ensured that data was collected from the target population (Creswell, 2014). By sampling the entire population, the study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the population's perspectives and experiences on the implementation of integrated schools in Tboli West District.

Sampling the entire population in small populations is beneficial as it allows for a desirable level of accuracy in data collection (Babbie, 2016).

Data Gathering Instrument

This research used a comprehensive data collection approach, utilizing structured survey questionnaires that the researcher has meticulously designed. These questionnaires were organized into five parts to ensure a systematic and thorough examination of the integrated school system in Tboli West District.

The first section of the survey was dedicated to capturing essential information about the participating schools. It encompassed various aspects of the school's profile, including its location, size, resources, and administrative details. This initial part aimed to establish a contextual foundation for the study by providing an overview of the schools within the Tboli West District.

Moving on to the second section, the survey focused on the extent to which integrated schools were effectively breaking educational barriers. This section explored aspects such as curriculum integration, teaching methods, and resource allocation, shedding light on the strategies employed to create a seamless transition for students from elementary to junior high school. It sought to gauge the schools' success in overcoming obstacles and promoting uninterrupted learning.



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The third part of the questionnaire evaluated the degree of success in facilitating the school transition process. It examined the preparedness of teachers, the effectiveness of curriculum integration, and the support mechanisms in place to aid students during this critical juncture. This section has assessed how well-integrated schools prepare students for the challenges of junior high school.

The fourth section explored various dimensions of student outcomes within integrated schools. It has encompassed academic performance, socio-emotional development, and holistic skills acquisition. This part of the survey has sought to understand the impact of integrated schooling on students and their overall development.

Finally, the fifth and last section of the questionnaire focused on identifying the key issues and concerns integrated schools face during their implementation. It has encouraged respondents to provide insights into challenges related to resource allocation, teacher preparedness, and community engagement. This section highlights areas requiring attention and improvement within the integrated school system.

By structuring the survey this way, the research aims to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of integrated schools in Tboli West District. The multi-faceted approach, spanning school profiles, curriculum implementation, transition processes, student outcomes, and challenges, has provided a holistic view of the integrated school system's impact on education within the district.

Respondents' responses were rated using a four-point Likert scale. The Likert scale is a commonly used rating scale in survey research (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). It provides individuals with statements or questions and asks them to rate their agreement or disagreement on a positive-to-negative scale (McLeod, 2019). This study employed a four-point Likert scale without a neutral option and encouraged respondents to provide specific, distinct responses.

A four-point Likert scale allowed a range of responses that provided more nuanced insights into the participants' level towards implementing the integrated school. This approach enhanced the specificity and clarity of the data collected, enabling a better understanding of the participant's responses (McLeod, 2019).

The researcher-made survey tool underwent validation and reliability testing. In this study, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to assess the reliability of the questionnaire employed. Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used measure of internal consistency, evaluating the extent to which items in a scale or questionnaire are correlated and measure the same underlying construct (George & Mallery, 2003).

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection is the systematic process of obtaining observations or measurements involving planning, methods, and gathering, storing, and processing data (Bhandari, 2022). Despite potential variations in methods and objectives, the general data collection process remained consistent in the study. Thus, the following are the phases of data gathering:

Preparatory Phase: The researchers has sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent through a consent letter to conduct the study in the identified schools. The letter included an explanation of the study's parameters and title. Upon approval, the researcher and respondents agreed on the schedules for conducting the study, target sections, and the scope and constraints of the investigation. This phase covered the respondents' roles, restrictions, and survey guidelines.

Administration Phase: The researcher clearly explained the survey guidelines to the respondents, provided instructions or directions on completing the questionnaire, and emphasized the importance of honesty in responding to the survey. The survey questionnaires were then administered to the respondents.

Collection/Retrieval Phase: After completing the questionnaire, the respondents' questionnaires were collected or retrieved for statistical analysis.

Statistical Treatment

This study has utilized descriptive and correlation statistics to analyze the data. The profile was treated using frequency distribution and percentage. The extent of breaking barriers, extent of transition, and level of student outcomes were determined using mean and standard deviation. The mean was employed as a representative measure of the data, considering every value in the dataset (Manikandan, 2011). Additionally, the standard deviation provided a comprehensive understanding of the dataset's characteristics, allowing for a quick overview of the data spread (Richard, 2010).

The significant difference between the extent of education program transition based on integrated school profile was determined using regression. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the significant

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relationship between the extent of transition and student outcome level. Norman (2010) emphasized that parametric tests, such as the Pearson correlation, are reliable for assessing Likert scale responses and can generate unbiased conclusions that are acceptably close to the truth. Correlation coefficients describe the strength and direction of the association between variables, with the Pearson correlation specifically measuring the linear association between two normally distributed random variables (Schoeber et al., 2018).

Ethical Considerations

The researchers ensured that all research protocols involving ethics in research were complied with for the protection of all people and institutions involved in the conduct of the study.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section systematically presents, analyzes, and interprets the collected data. The results as summarized in tables, are critically examined to report the objectives of the study and provide meaningful insights into the research problem.

Tables 1 presents the profile of integrated schools in Tboli West District regarding classroom size.

Classroom Size	f		%	
Standard		186		77%
Small		48		20%
Large		8		3%
Total		242		100%

Table 1. School Profile in Terms of Classroom Size

The data reveals that the highest score is for the Standard category, with 186 (77%), indicating that the majority falls under this classification. On the other hand, the lowest score is in the large category, with only 8 (3%), suggesting minimal representation. This suggests that the majority of the classrooms in integrated schools are the standard size of the Department of Education.

These findings align with the Department of Education's guidelines, which define a standard classroom size as accommodating up to 35 students (Senate of the Philippines, 2022). Table 6 presents the profile of integrated schools in Tboli West District regarding class size.

Table 2 presents the profile of integrated schools in terms of class size.

Table 2. Profile of Integrated Schools in Terms of Class Size

Class Size	f	%
Minimum (less than 50)	152	63%
Ideal (50)	61	25%
Maximum (65 and more)	29	12%
Total	242	100%

Most classes fall under the minimum category (less than 50 students), with 152 classes (63%), indicating that most classrooms maintain a manageable number of students. This suggests a favorable student-teacher ratio, which may contribute to better learning experiences and individualized instruction.

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Meanwhile, 61 classes (25%) fall within the ideal class size (50 students), aligning with standard recommendations for classroom capacity. This reflects a balanced distribution where a significant portion of classes meets the expected student number for optimal instruction.

On the other hand, the maximum category (65 or more students) has the lowest representation, with only 29 classes (12%). This suggests that overcrowding is not a prevalent issue in most integrated schools, though a small percentage still experiences larger class sizes, potentially impacting learning conditions.

Overall, the data suggests that integrated schools generally operate with class sizes that promote effective teaching and learning, with most classrooms remaining within or below the recommended capacity. These findings support prior research indicating that maintaining optimal class sizes leads to better educational outcomes, particularly in student participation, comprehension, and overall academic achievement (De Vera & Cruz, 2023). These findings align with DepEd (2021), which emphasizes that an ideal student-teacher ratio facilitates effective classroom management and instruction, ensuring that learners receive adequate attention and support.

Relatively, Nord Anglia Education (2020) emphasizes that smaller class sizes enhance student engagement, improve academic performance, and allow teachers to provide more personalized support. Table 7 presents the profile of integrated schools in Tboli West District regarding the grade level offered.

Table 3 presents the profile of integrated schools in Tboli West District regarding the grade level offered.

Grade Level Offered	f	%
Grade 7-10	151	62%
Grade 7-12	91	38%
Total	242	100%

Table 3. Profile of Integrated Schools in Terms of Grade Level Offered

Most integrated schools provide education from Grades 7 to 10, accounting for 151 schools (62%). This indicates that most integrated schools primarily cater to junior high school students. In contrast, 91 schools (38%) offer a complete Grade 7 to 12 program, extending education to senior high school. While this represents a smaller portion, it still signifies a substantial number of integrated schools supporting students through their final years of secondary education.

The data suggests that while many integrated schools focus on junior high school, a significant percentage are equipped to provide senior high school education, aligning with the Department of Education's goal of expanding access to quality education across different grade levels (DepEd, 2023). This is consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of a seamless transition between junior and senior high school to ensure continuity in learning and skill development (Guzman & Reyes, 2021). According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2021), schools offering junior high schools often prioritize foundational education while gradually expanding to accommodate higher grade levels based on available resources.

Table 4 presents the summary of extent of barriers in integrated schools.

Table 4. Summary of Extent of Barriers in Integrated Schools

	Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1.	Land Title and Territories	3.28	0.69	Moderate Extent
2.	Manpower Mobilization	3.18	0.76	Moderate Extent
3.	Financial Management	3.02	0.79	Moderate Extent
4.	Physical Barriers	2.91	0.83	Moderate Extent



Mean	3.10	0.77	Moderate Extent	
				_
mong the four key areas assessed	Land Titles and Territorie	c received t	he highest mean score of 3 28 (S	

Among the four key areas assessed, Land Titles and Territories received the highest mean score = 0.69), indicating that schools have made the most progress in securing land ownership, ensuring accessibility, and optimizing land use.

Conversely, Physical Barriers received the lowest mean score of 2.91 (SD = 0.83), suggesting that challenges related to infrastructure, facilities, and accessibility persist and require further attention.

With an overall mean score of 3.10 (SD = 0.77), the findings suggest that integrated schools have made moderate progress in breaking down barriers. While some areas, particularly land-related concerns, show relatively better management, continuous improvements in infrastructure, resource allocation, and personnel management are necessary to create a more efficient and conducive learning environment.

This aligns with findings from recent studies by the World Bank (2021) highlighting the importance of land security in school development and long-term educational planning. It also aligns with UNESCO (2020), emphasizing that proper land documentation and ownership contribute to school stability and facilitate infrastructure expansion, ultimately enhancing the learning environment (UNESCO, 2020).

Table 5 summarizes the extent of school transition in integrated schools in Tboli West District

Indicator		Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1.	curriculum and instruction	3.39	0.51	Moderate Extent
2.	teacher's preparedness and professional			
	development	3.39	0.53	Moderate Extent
3.	student engagement and participation	3.18	0.54	Moderate Extent
4.	parent and community involvement	3.04	0.58	Moderate Extent
5.	resources and facilities	2.45	0.64	Moderate Extent
Mean		3.09	0.56	Moderate Extent

The highest-rated indicators in the study are curriculum and instruction and teachers' preparedness and professional development, with a mean score of 3.39 (SD = 0.51 and 0.53, respectively), interpreted as a moderate extent. This suggests that integrated schools in the Tboli West District have made progress in aligning their curriculum with national standards and supporting teachers' professional growth. However, there remains room for improvement in optimizing these areas to ensure more effective school transitions.

Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator is resources and facilities, with a mean score of 2.45 (SD = 0.64), also interpreted as a moderate extent. This finding underscore significant challenges related to the adequacy of learning materials, infrastructure, and technological resources, which may hinder the seamless transition of students in integrated schools.

With an overall mean score of 3.09 (SD = 0.56), the findings suggest that transition in integrated schools within the Tboli West District occurs moderately. While curriculum alignment, teacher preparedness, and student engagement show relatively higher levels of effectiveness, gaps in parental involvement and the availability of resources and facilities remain key areas for development.

The findings agree with Schleicher (2020), who emphasizes strengthening community collaboration, increasing parental participation, and improving resource allocation to create a more effective and inclusive transition process. It also aligns with UNESCO's (2021) studies, which highlight that curriculum alignment with national educational frameworks enhances student learning continuity, while teacher professional development is crucial in fostering instructional quality and student achievement. Relatively, the availability of well-equipped classrooms, libraries, and digital resources plays a critical role in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes (OECD, 2022). Inadequate facilities can contribute to overcrowded classrooms, limited access to instructional materials, and reduced student motivation (UNESCO, 2023).

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Table 6 summarizes the level of students' outcomes in integrated school

Table 6. Summary of the Level of Students' Outcomes in Integrated Schools

	Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1.	Socio-emotional development	3.17	0.69	Moderate
2.	Transition readiness	3.05	0.61	Moderate
3.	Academic behavior	2.97	0.62	Moderate
4.	Holistic skills	2.95	0.65	Moderate
	Mean	3.03	0.65	Moderate

The highest-rated indicator is socio-emotional development, with a mean score of 3.17 (SD = 0.69), interpreted as moderate. This suggests that students generally demonstrate the ability to manage emotions, build relationships, and navigate social interactions effectively, essential competencies for a smooth transition to the next educational level.

Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator is holistic skills, with a mean score of 2.95 (SD = 0.65), also interpreted as moderate. This suggests that while students engage in teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking, there is room for improvement in fostering these skills more effectively to ensure they become well-rounded learners.

The overall mean score was 3.03 (SD = 0.65). The findings suggest that students in integrated schools demonstrate moderate transition readiness. While socio-emotional development is relatively strong, a need remains to enhance students' academic behavior, holistic skills, and preparedness for transition.

The findings confirm that schools may consider implementing targeted interventions, such as mentorship programs, skills-based workshops, and academic coaching, better to equip students for the next stage of their education. Strengthening these areas could support a seamless transition and promote long-term academic and personal success (Garcia & Thomas, 2021). Research highlights that socio-emotional skills are crucial to students' overall academic success and adaptability to new learning environments (Durlak et al., 2022). Studies indicate that project-based learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and experiential learning opportunities can significantly enhance students' holistic development (Robinson & Aronica, 2023).

Additionally, the findings conform to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), whose idea posits that a learner's development is influenced by multiple layers of environmental systems, including the microsystem (school, family), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), exosystem (school policies, local government), and macrosystem (cultural and societal values).

Testing The Significant Difference Between The Extent Of Education Program Transition Based On Integrated School Profile

The table below presents the results of the multiple regression analysis between the school profile, which shows classroom size, class size, and grade level offered on the extent of program transition.

Table 7 shows the school profile results, which show the extent of program transition by classroom size and grade level.

Table 7. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Between School Profile Which Classroom Size, Class Size, And Grade Level Offered on The Extent of Program Transition

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Constant	2.876	.129	22.339	.000
Classroom size	.119	.061	1.947	.053
Class size	075	.038	1.974	.050
Grade level offered	.025	.057	.439	.661



Note: R²=.034

The regression model yields an R² value of 0.034, indicating that the school profile variables can explain only 3.4% of the variance in the extent of program transition. This suggests that other factors not included in the model may significantly influence program transition.

Among the predictors, Classroom size has a positive coefficient of 0.119 with a p-value of 0.053, slightly above the conventional significance level of 0.05. This suggests that a larger classroom may contribute somewhat to program transition but is not a significant predictor. On the other hand, class size has a negative coefficient of -0.075 with a pvalue of 0.050, indicating a statistically significant but small effect. This suggests that the extent of program transition slightly decreases as class size increases. Hence, the grade level offered has a coefficient of 0.025 with a p-value of 0.661, indicating that it does not significantly influence program transition.

The findings conform to the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) comprehensive report on education in the Philippines (2016), emphasizing the imperative of sustained investments in school infrastructure and resources, particularly in marginalized regions. This resonates with the core principle of integrated schools, which are committed to providing equitable access to quality education. The efficient management and equitable distribution of resources and facilities within education are universal imperatives recognized across international literature and global initiatives. The World Bank's research (2018) on resource allocation in education resonates with the global perspective on efficient resource management. It emphasizes that resource allocation should prioritize equity and inclusivity, mirroring integrated schools' core mission to provide education to all, regardless of their background or geographical location. In the European Journal of Education Studies (EJES), an article (2019) delves into the international perspective on school facilities and resources. It underlines that access to quality education universally hinges on the availability of resources and facilities, emphasizing the need for global endeavors to ensure equitable access. This perspective reflects the objectives of integrated schools in the Philippines within an international context (EJES).

Testing the relationship between the extent of transition and the level of student outcome

The table below presents the results of the correlation analysis between the extent of transition and the level of student outcomes in integrated schools in Tboli West District.

	n	r	p value	Interpretation
Extent of transition and level of student's outcome Extent of transition and level of student's outcome	242	0.563	0.000	There is a significant relationship between the extent of program transition and level of students' outcome

The findings reveal a moderate positive relationship between the extent of program transition and the level of students' outcomes in integrated schools, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of r = 0.563. With a p-value of 0.000, the relationship is statistically significant, suggesting that as the implementation of transition programs improves, students tend to perform better academically, socially, and emotionally. This implies that curriculum alignment, teacher preparedness, student engagement, and resource availability are crucial in supporting students during school transitions. However, since the correlation is moderate, other factors may contribute to student success.

The findings align with Cruz (2017), who argues that Integrated schools in the Philippines play a critical role in ensuring a cohesive and well-structured curriculum that facilitates students' seamless transition from elementary to junior high school. It supported Oracion (2018), who posits that curriculum is thoughtfully designed to maintain educational continuity while preparing students for the increased academic rigor of higher grade levels. It seeks to create a smooth bridge between the elementary and secondary phases of education, ensuring that students acquire academic knowledge and develop essential skills and competencies for their future educational journey.

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Testing the relationship between the extent of Breaking Barriers and the level of student outcome

The table below presents the results of the correlation analysis between the extent of breaking barriers and the level of student outcomes in integrated schools in Tboli West District.

	n	r	p value	Interpretation
Extent of breaking barriers and level of student's outcome Extent of transition and level of student's outcome	242	0.394	0.000	There is a significant relationship between the extent of breaking barriers and level of students' outcome

The results indicate a moderate positive relationship between the extent of breaking barriers and the level of students' outcomes in integrated schools, with a correlation coefficient of r = 0.394. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that efforts to reduce physical, financial, and administrative barriers, such as improving school facilities, securing land titles, mobilizing manpower, and enhancing financial management, can positively influence students' academic, socio-emotional, and holistic development.

However, since the correlation is moderate, other factors beyond breaking barriers, such as teacher effectiveness, student motivation, and curriculum quality, may also impact student outcomes. Strengthening school infrastructure, improving accessibility, and ensuring adequate support systems could enhance student success and overall school transition effectiveness.

The findings align with UNICEF (2016), which states that integrated schools can implement tailored support programs designed to address the specific needs of transitioning students. Schools can help students overcome academic and socio-cultural barriers by offering targeted assistance. Furthermore, ensuring that integrated schools receive equitable resources breaks financial barriers. Adequate financial support and the provision of educational materials are essential. Effective financial management and resource allocation strategies can mitigate economic challenges faced by students and their families (DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2020).

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

The favorable class size distribution suggests that schools have the potential to provide quality learning experiences. However, while many schools accommodate junior high school levels, the limited number of senior high school schools offering it indicates a gap in delivering seamless secondary education. Strengthening educational programs and resources for senior high school students is essential to ensure a smooth academic transition.

Meanwhile, though schools have made progress in securing land and ensuring accessibility, the persistent challenges in physical infrastructure and financial management highlight the need for increased investment in facilities and resources.

On the other hand, efforts in curriculum alignment and student engagement are evident; limited resources and insufficient teacher training hinder effective transitions. Enhancing teacher preparedness through professional development and increasing access to educational materials can significantly improve students' transition experiences. As students exhibit a fair degree of socio-emotional stability, there is a need to strengthen academic behaviors and holistic skills. Schools should implement targeted interventions to improve study habits, motivation, and critical thinking abilities.

It also highlighted the well-structured transition programs in shaping student success. Strengthening curriculum alignment, teacher collaboration, and student support systems can enhance student outcomes. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of transition strategies can ensure that students receive the necessary academic and socioemotional guidance for a seamless progression through school levels.

Finally, addressing barriers contributes to student success; other factors, such as curriculum quality, teacher effectiveness, and student motivation, play crucial roles. A holistic approach means integrating infrastructure improvements with effective teaching strategies and student support initiatives.

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Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the facts and conclusions drawn from this study:

- 1. Department of Education and school administrators may consider expanding senior high school offerings in more integrated schools to provide students with a seamless transition from junior to senior high school. This can be achieved by allocating additional resources, hiring qualified teachers, and improving facilities to accommodate senior high school learners.
- 2. Schools may prioritize infrastructure improvements by securing additional funding for classroom construction, restrooms, and accessible learning spaces. Government agencies and private stakeholders should collaborate to provide financial support and technical assistance in enhancing school facilities.
- 3. Teachers may engage in regular training programs focused on curriculum adaptation, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive teaching. These programs can help educators improve their instructional strategies and better support students during school transitions.
- 4. Develop targeted intervention programs such as peer mentoring, study habit workshops, and academic counseling to enhance students' academic behavior and transition readiness. Strengthening guidance services can help address students' learning challenges and motivate them.
- 5. Establish structured transition programs that include career guidance, student orientation, and teacher collaboration activities. Ensuring a smooth academic transition can help improve student outcomes and overall readiness for higher levels of education.
- 6. Implement strategic planning initiatives integrating infrastructure development with teacher support and student-centered learning programs. This holistic approach can address environmental and instructional barriers, improving student academic and socio-emotional outcomes.
- 7. Schools may address environmental and instructional barriers, improving academic and socio-emotional outcomes.
- 8. Future studies on the benefit of integrated schools, the educational perspective, and developing more effective, culturally sensitive educational strategies and cultural communities are also recommended.

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